During the times of COVID-19, many of us have been feeling stress and uncertainty. Feelings of disappointment are commonly felt, especially because many plans are being cancelled. This is especially true for individuals with disabilities, especially those who attend camp programs during the summer. Explaining why summer programs are being cancelled, and asking for flexibility during this time, is especially challenging to people who care for individuals with disabilities.

“My Summer During COVID-19” is a social story meant to facilitate the understanding of why camp is cancelled, and what alternatives may look like during this summer. The social story is meant to be administered to children, young adults, and adults with disabilities, with a varied degree of ability levels, as a way to serve this need. “My Summer During COVID-19” is designed to allow for an individual to understand the current circumstances, and cope with the loss of their typical camp experience.

The social story can be used with a parent, caretaker or teacher. It should ideally be printed out (although it can also be used on the computer or tablet) and presented to the individual with disabilities. The social story can be given to the individual with disabilities for his/her keeping, or can be kept in an agreed upon space. The educator or caretaker should read it with the individual in a quiet place, free from other distractions. The social story may be read on a scheduled basis. Plan how often the social story will be read.

The social story is interactive. There are opportunities for the individual with disabilities to write, type or speak, as the story has directed prompts to make the story more individualized.

Aside from this social story, if the individual with disability is having difficulty coping with the summer adjustments, some of the following suggestions may be found helpful in order to develop healthy coping mechanisms:

- Encourage the individual to keep in touch with a friend from camp by phone, video chat, or email.
- Create a scrapbook for camp that allows the individual to have a physical “piece of camp” with them for the summer, even though they will not be able to be in camp in person.
- If the camp has provided “at-home-camp” programs, take those seriously! This could allow the camper to feel like they are still a part of the camp.

I hope that “My Summer During COVID-19” will be found to be a helpful tool.
Things have been a little bit strange since COVID-19 started. COVID-19 is a virus that people can catch from being around other people who are sick with it. It is passed on by tiny drops that my eyes can’t even see! These drops can make me sick.
Since COVID-19 started, I have been staying away from people who are sick with the virus. I have also been staying away from groups of people, because some people may still have the virus, and they don’t even know they are sick or seem to be sick! That is why we need to practice “social distancing.” Social distancing means keeping a distance of at least 6 feet from people we do not live with, and wearing a mask when we leave our home.
Many things have been different since COVID-19 started. I have not been able to go to school. I have not been able to see my friends very often. I have not been able to go to the store without wearing a mask.
I have had to be very flexible when these changes started happening in my life, even though I was not used to many of these things. It is important for me to be flexible when things like this happen.
During the summer, I usually go to camp. At camp, I do a lot of fun things that I really enjoy. I see different friends at my camp. I also do a lot of activities at camp.
I have some really nice friends at camp.

My friends from camp are named:

______________________
I also do a lot of fun things at camp. Some of my favorite activities that I do at camp are:
This year, because of COVID-19, I cannot go to camp. Camp needs to be closed for everyone because it is not safe for campers to be there. If I was allowed to go to camp, I may get sick, or my friends may get sick. In order for me to stay healthy, I cannot go to camp. None of my friends are able to go to camp either. This is not a punishment for me. Camp being closed was out of everyone's control.
Because I cannot go to camp, I have a lot of feelings. I may be feeling sad, disappointed, confused, and angry. Right now, I am feeling:
I will talk to the people around me, like my friends and family, about my feelings.

I can even speak to people on the phone about my feelings. It is important for me to let other people know how I am feeling.
Because I will not be going to camp this year, my summer will look very different from what I am used to.

Just because I will not be going to camp, I can still have fun this summer. Camp may have programs for me to do at home.

I will be flexible when they tell me what kinds of activities they may come up with for me to do.
I may have a lot of questions about why camp is closed. I may also have a lot of questions about what I will do this summer instead of going to camp. It is important that I ask these questions. I will be patient when many of these questions do not have answers to them. If I get frustrated, I can take deep breaths to calm myself down, and talk about it with others.
This summer:
I can do an art project
I can talk to my friends over Zoom
I can go on a walk
I can exercise
I can go to the beach
I can write letters to my camp friends
I can watch my favorite TV show
I can help prepare my favorite meals
I can play music
This summer is going to be very fun.